

Given a fable, the reader identifies a suitable moral.

**UNIT 3**  
**Lesson 1**  
**Recognizing Main Ideas**

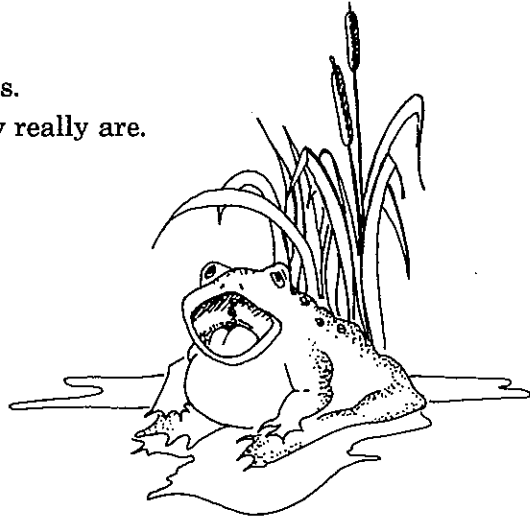
**TECHNICAL TALK**

The story below about a frog is called a fable. A fable is a very short story. Usually, but not always, animals do the acting in the story. A fable teaches a lesson, and it nearly always has a "moral" at the end telling what the lesson is. The moral gives the main idea of the fable.

**TRY IT**

There are several morals written below. Three of them could be placed at the end of the fable about "The Frog Who Croaked Too Loud." Mark the three that fit best by putting an X in the box in front of each moral you choose.

1. ☐ Frogs croak a lot.
2. ☐ The loudest frog is not always the smartest.
3. ☐ Don't talk with your mouth full.
4. ☐ There are some things you can't say to your friends.
5. ☐ Some folks think they are more powerful than they really are.
6. ☐ Some folks just talk too much.



**THE FROG WHO CROAKED TOO LOUD**

Once there was a frog with a mighty voice. There wasn't another frog, or any other creature for that matter, who could match him in croaking. Whenever he started, all the other frogs for a mile around stopped to listen. They had to. He drowned them out. Whenever the frogs got together for a meeting, he croaked steadily for hours. The other frogs couldn't get a croak in edgewise. They usually went home early. All the other frogs called their friend with the big voice "Big Mouth."

One day a crane came to live at the pond where Big Mouth lived. There was nothing this particular crane liked better for breakfast than a good frog. The crane began eating the population.

It wasn't long until the frogs held a meeting to decide what to do. As usual, Big Mouth talked long and loud. Some frogs were for moving to another pond. Others thought they should hide in the mud until the crane left town. Others had other ideas, but Big Mouth wasn't listening as usual.

"I'm going to stop this here and now!" he croaked. "I won't stand for it. No crane can come in here and take over our pond. In the morning I'll give that crane a piece of my mind!" Well, the other frogs tried to stop him, but he wasn't listening again.

Next morning, early, he hopped up to the crane and opened his mouth to croak his loudest. Before he could say a thing, the crane snapped him up and swallowed him down.

The best morals for "The Frog Who Croaked Too Loud" are numbers 2, 5, and 6. The frog was certainly not very smart and he talked very loud. So number 2 is a good moral. Number 5 is right because the frog thought he could really chase the crane off just by telling her to leave. He thought he had more power than he really had. And number 6 is also good because Big Mouth did talk just too much. If he had listened to the other frogs, he might have lasted longer.

Which moral of these three do you think is best? Maybe number 2 is the one that sounds the best and would be easiest to remember.

See whether you can pick out the morals in the following story.

### THE JUNKYARD DOG

There was once a handsome dog owned by a very rich master. The dog had a beautiful coat, a very fancy collar, and the shiniest dog tags in the neighborhood. He was also very, very proud! He hadn't learned manners very well from his mama. At last, his master had to enroll him in obedience school.

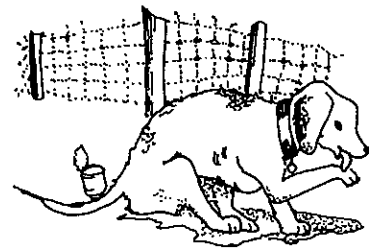
The dog was proud to be going to a fancy school that cost a lot of money. Every day he was delivered to the school in the family car. Every day he strutted around the school telling all the other dogs how great he was and how rich his master was. It was too bad, but that dog really didn't pay much attention to his lessons. He got behind in "sitting up" and "rolling over." He never did figure out exactly what he was supposed to do in "speaking." And, worst of all, he didn't care to "heel" at all. He thought it was below him. Soon the principal had to call his master.

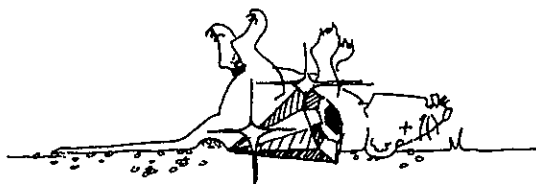
"This dog doesn't seem to be able to learn," said the principal. "He seems to be thinking about something else all the time. I just don't know what to do."

Sadly, because the dog was a beautiful animal, his master sold him to a junkyard. The rest of his life the dog had to sit among the junk barking at strangers. All he got to eat were scraps. He wished he had worked harder and thought less about how great he was.

There are some morals for the story listed below. Mark the three best ones with an X in the box.

1. ☐ There is more to school than getting there.
2. ☐ Dogs should only bark when they are asked to.
3. ☐ Too much pride is a dangerous thing.
4. ☐ Dogs who don't learn may lose their happy homes.
5. ☐ One dog is often too many.
6. ☐ Junk men need dogs too.
7. ☐ Dogs can usually be taught to sit.





### THE PACK RAT'S PRECIOUS STONES

There was a pack rat that lived in the desert. He was very lucky for a pack rat. He moved into a hole that was right in the middle of a big field of precious stones. Everywhere he looked there were beautiful stones on the ground. All he had to do was pick them up and they were his. He could sit in the entry of his dugout, and his whole yard glittered.

That would have been good enough for most animals, but this was a pack rat, folks. He just had to collect things. In fact, this pack rat was worse than most pack rats. He couldn't resist those gems. He started to move those stones, one by one, into his tunnels. The tunnels he had were not big enough. He had to dig bigger ones. He worked night and day packing in the stones and digging the tunnels to keep them in.

The pack rat didn't take time out to eat or sleep. Those stones weighed on his mind so he couldn't sleep. He got thinner and thinner. He had bags under his eyes, and his own sister could hardly recognize him when she came for a visit. She tried to tell him to stop. "You've got more already than a single pack rat could want in a lifetime. It's time to stop!" But he wouldn't listen. He still had to have more of the precious stones locked up in his tunnels.

Finally, after he had been missing one night, his friends went to look for him. In the morning they found him lying in the field of precious stones. Next to him was a huge stone he had been trying to drag home the night before. He was dead.

Below are several things the pack rat's friends might have said after he died. Which two make the best morals for this fable? Mark them with an X in the box.

1. ☐ "Poor Looey was a good pack rat."
2. ☐ "Wanting too much has killed more than one."
3. ☐ "Waste not, want not."
4. ☐ "What good is it to have riches when you are dead?"
5. ☐ "Keep up the good work Looey."
6. ☐ "Time keeps going by."

#### HOW DID YOU DO?

